

Division 36: Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries — Services 1 to 3 and 6 to 16, Culture and the Arts; Sport and Recreation, \$639 534 000 —

Ms M.M. Quirk, Chair.

Mr D.A. Templeman, Minister for Culture and the Arts; Sport and Recreation.

Ms L. Chopping, Director General.

Ms E. Gauntlett, Deputy Director General, Management and Coordination.

Ms S. Magadza, Executive Director, Culture and the Arts.

Mr M. Hayes, Executive Director, Sport and Recreation.

Mr C. Klymovich, Executive Director, Infrastructure.

Ms L. Kalasopatan, Executive Director, Finance.

Mr L. Carren, Executive Director, Corporate Services.

Mr C. White, Director, Programs.

Ms T. Widdicombe, Chief of Staff, Minister for Culture and the Arts.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIR: The estimates committees will be reported by Hansard, and the daily proof will be available online as soon as possible within two business days. The chair will allow as many questions as possible. Questions and answers should be short and to the point. Consideration is restricted to items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. Questions must relate to a page number, item or amount related to the current division, and members should preface their questions with these details. Some divisions are the responsibility of more than one minister. Ministers shall only be examined in relation to their portfolio responsibilities.

A minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee. I will ask the minister to clearly indicate what information they agree to provide and will then allocate a reference number. Supplementary information should be provided to the principal clerk by noon on Friday, 2 June 2023. If a minister suggests that a matter be put on notice, members should use the online questions on notice system to submit their questions.

The first question is to the member for Roe.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I refer to page 534 of budget paper No 2, service 6, “Sport and Recreation Industry Support”. This is under the service summary, of course. Why is there such a big difference between the 2022–23 budget amount of \$271 million and the estimated actual spend of \$160 million in 2022–23? Can the minister explain the difference of the \$111 million? Why was it not spent?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: As the member is aware, in the 2023–24 budget year, as a result of building and construction industry pressures, there were a number of carryovers of project underspends in line with changes to project delivery milestones. These underspends have primarily been carried forward into the 2023–24 budget. Like other industries, the capacity, if you like, to deliver projects under their initial costs have been impacted by construction and building pressures, so this has caused 2023–24 to be higher relative to 2024–25. Some relevant projects include the Kiernan Park recreation precinct, the Dalyellup multipurpose centre and the additional funding provided for the WACA ground redevelopment, which I know the member and I support very strongly. That is the reason for those changes or variances. The reality is that we wanted to continue to deliver those projects, but we have to deliver them under constrained building and construction industry pressure.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I refer further along on the same line item. Given this government’s lack of ability to deliver, we have sort of seen a —

The CHAIR: A preamble like that is not appropriate, member. Let us just ask the question with just the facts.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Okay, I was flowing on from the minister’s comments.

We go into \$378 million for 2023–24, which I assume takes into account the WACA and some of the other large projects, and then we see a dramatic drop-off to \$129 million, \$115 million and \$102 million in the out years. Can the minister explain to us the massive drop-off after the 2023–24 budget year?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Of course, I cannot commence my response without correcting the member. We have had and continue to have very high demand, and we are delivering under circumstances that have been faced internationally and nationally. In fact, we are delivering high-quality projects and programs throughout Western Australia. Indeed, in regional Western Australia, in the member’s electorate and in other regional electorates, people have been the beneficiaries of some outstanding projects, be they basketball court additions, hardcourt

expansions or programs that have delivered additional sporting facilities throughout the state. I refute the member's premise. However, we recognise, as do other parts of the state, that to get the high-quality outcomes that we want and that the community deserves for projects like the East Fremantle redevelopment, for example, additional funding was needed to complete the project. I would hate to tell East Fremantle Football Club and that community that the member does not support its project. If that is what the member is assuming or alluding to, I will go and tell them. I know that the member is a sort of "MetroNat" now, as has been highlighted by the Minister for Planning.

The fact of the matter is this: we have delivered some record election commitments throughout Western Australia. In every electorate, some outstanding election commitments have been delivered. Capital works projects have been completed. We have the football centre in Queens Park, which is almost complete, and additions to the Perth Rectangular Stadium in preparation for the FIFA Women's World Cup. We have works in every region and in the metropolitan region, and we are very proud of it. We will keep doing it and providing those projects going forward. The Western Australian community will benefit greatly from that. When there has been a challenge to a budget because of cost pressures, that has been responded to with a number of projects by the Treasurer. Those communities are going to benefit into the future because of projects being delivered by a Labor government.

[8.30 pm]

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I refer to page 548 under details of controlled grants and subsidies and the line item "Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund". Obviously I welcome the minister's announcement last week, or whenever it was, in relation to the increase of \$7.5 million for those couple of years. My concern is that in the out years we seem to be dropping again back to \$12.2 million and \$11.4 million. Can the minister enlighten me about why we have dropped right back in the CSRFF?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The significant uplift in CSRFF funding is not only welcomed but it is also an outstanding decision to recognise that this fund has been highly successful over a number of years. We will be increasing that fund with an uplift to a total of \$20 million a year over the next two years. I expect that there will be high subscription to that program within the next financial year and probably the following year. Indeed, the government will consider future budgets, but the reality is that the huge uplift will be in place for the next two years. I expect it will be very well contested. I also highlight to the member that we want to streamline the process, because we recognise that we want to make it easier and have a more streamlined process in place to deliver the great outcomes that come from the CSRFF program. The process will see projects up to \$500 000 being streamlined. This means that it will go to a 50/50 funding split from the next round starting on 1 July. I expect greater demand, if you like, from the night lights program. That has been highly successful. I congratulate my predecessor on initiating the night lights program, because in various facilities throughout Western Australia the upgrade or addition of lighting means that community organisations and sporting groups can train for greater lengths of time. Obviously, the extension of use of a facility through lighting means that we can continue to cater for the uplift in participation. A number of codes are seeing huge growth in female participation at a community sport level. Some codes are reporting 20 per cent participation uplifts in the female game—Australian Football League, soccer and other sports. This is a targeted effort to support community sport throughout the state. In terms of future budgets, that will of course be a consideration for the minister responsible and indeed for the Treasurer, ultimately, but CSRFF is very successful and will continue.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: The minister referred to a 50/50 contribution or a change of scenario and a streamlining. Can the minister clarify whether that was for projects under \$500 000?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: This is specifically for grants under \$500 000. The application can be for a 50/50 split between local government and state contributions. We are getting reports from a lot of clubs about the capacity to raise the traditional one-third. Quite often it is within that smaller cohort of application. This simplifies it and makes it much easier. Of course, clubs will continue to offer in kind to the project, but we wanted to streamline it.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I welcome that. I think that is a good initiative because, as the minister knows, a tennis club might have a \$300 000 tennis court program or whatever that puts a lot of pressure on the tennis club.

Mr S.N. AUBREY: On the same line item, the minister has already touched on it a bit, but can he expand on how the CSRFF is providing benefits to community and sporting organisations across the state, and also highlight how the CSRFF is improving facilities for women and girls?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It is a very important question. I think all of us are particularly proud of this government's focus on making sure that sport, particularly in codes that have traditionally been male dominated, now caters for all abilities and women, girls, boys and men. The program has seen some remarkable projects funded around the state. There are a couple of examples in the member's electorate where investment in facilities mean that for the first time young women have appropriate change rooms to change in to play AFL, soccer, National Rugby League or whatever it might be. That is to be applauded. We still have further work to do in that, but we certainly have been encouraging local governments and sporting organisations to focus on this. We have, if you like, quarantined money to make sure that projects are delivered in that sphere, and so \$1 million is allocated each round to specifically approve

facilities for women in sport. I was pleased to be at Sorrento Football Club only last month or the month before and the new change rooms that cater for both genders are a remarkable commitment by the club and indeed the state government to fund those improvements.

I am sure members are aware that the FIFA Women's World Cup is a great opportunity for the code of soccer to genuinely demonstrate that it is a real challenge to AFL. A lot of parents are looking at soccer as an option for their daughters and sons because of the nature of the code, the skill and of course that we produced probably the world's best female soccer champion in recent history in Sam Kerr. All of that means that the FIFA Women's World Cup is going to be a magnificent opportunity for the code to deliver to the aspirations of girls and young women to play the game. We are matching that by funding facilities so that they are absolutely catered for, for example, in lighting. We are also building the football centre out in Queens Park, as well as upgrading a number of existing facilities.

I want to quickly give members a couple of examples because these are important. CSRFF female-friendly facilities for 2023 include a couple of the following. In Collie, the Railways Football and Sporting Club pavilion redevelopment included new change rooms. Looma had an upgrade of the oval, the change rooms and lighting. I was out in the Shire of Murray the other day with the member for Murray–Wellington, and the Sir Ross McLarty Sports Precinct oval had seen some upgrades. The Shire of Dardanup received funding for the construction of a pavilion—these are all regional, by the way. The City of Bunbury received funding for the construction of a pavilion at Forrest Park oval, and Capel Regional Equestrian Park had a pavilion constructed. This is great news for female participation in the game, and we will keep funding such initiatives.

[8.40 pm]

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I refer to page 549 and the line item “Kidsport” under the details of controlled grants and subsidies. Why is there a significant drop in funding of 50 per cent from this budget year 2023–24 over the forward estimates for this critical funding for families?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The annual budget allocation for KidSport is \$4.624 million. In 2023–24, the budget amount includes a carryover of \$4.5 million. This is due to an underspend in 2021–22 and, of course, that was partly attributed to COVID and a decline in applications for KidSport during that period. It was one of the reasons why, from memory, we doubled the KidSport allocation from \$150 to \$300 per child to try to stimulate a take-up as community sport came out of the COVID impact. We are watching this very carefully because KidSport remains a very important part of the suite of supports for children from families impacted by the issues around cost-of-living and financial security.

The director general reminds me that during the COVID period we thought there might have been a dramatic increase in unemployment, for example, and that more people might find themselves on the Health Care Card or some sort of government support, which would therefore make them eligible for KidSport. That, of course, did not happen because—guess what?—the government handled COVID extremely well. It ensured that businesses continued. It ensured that people remained in jobs, and, indeed, it ensured that they did not lose their jobs in vast numbers like places in other parts of Australia and the world.

We have included a carryover in the budget amount for 2023–24, but I can assure the member that I have asked the department to investigate ways we can look at enhancing the KidSport program to capture a greater number of families and support them in making sure their children play sport and continue to play sport. I also think there is an interesting challenge for some codes. The costs charged by various codes for children to play the game vary, and some of them very markedly. We are doing some work on this. We are seeking further data. We are hoping that sector entities like the Western Australian Institute of Sport can help us drill down into some of the codes that, quite frankly, are expensive. If someone has three children playing a particular code and it costs \$400 or \$500 per child to play that sport compared with another code that might be \$200 per child or even less, that is an issue for those codes more broadly about how junior sport needs to be supported. The Balga Junior Football Club, for example, through its fundraising efforts—it also attracts KidSport funding—works very hard to ensure that any child who signs up to play does play. If it means that the club supports them through additional subsidies so that that child, boy or girl, can run onto the field, then it does it. That is an area that we need to look at. I have asked the department to look at how we can expand the net to include families that we can assist through KidSport going forward, and it is doing that work at the moment.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: As the minister knows, my predecessor, Hon Tuck Waldron, was the initiator of KidSport, which is a very important element of the budget. I have Indigenous families in my electorate, in Tambellup and other places, who want their kids to play sport but have cost-of-living issues and are struggling to fund their kids. When the minister says that he will be monitoring this, will he have a look at potentially going back to where the government was funding \$300 per child or something similar in this environment in which the cost of living is high?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Those issues will be part of the considerations of the work that the department is doing. I am a strong supporter of the KidSport program. We want to look at ways to make sure that it captures a greater number of families. In my electorate, lots of families have more than one child. We want them to play sport, but if

the family is on fixed income or a social benefit—the social benefit of sport is huge—or are constrained financially, we have to look at the existing programs and the expansion of the existing programs, and I am absolutely willing to do that. That is what the department is doing at the moment through that work that it has commenced. In the year to date, we have funded nearly \$3 million for the KidSport program—over 1 470 clubs, 20 000 children and around 21 000 vouchers.

I even have a KidSport breakdown for the member for Roe’s electorate of over \$53 000. I am sure the member will promote, as I do, the KidSport program so that parents will be well aware of the support that it provides. The member has my assurance that we will keep working very hard.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Was the minister referring to a breakdown by electorate there for that figure that he just quoted?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes. I have some figures for the member’s electorate.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Is it possible to have those figures supplied by supplementary information?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am happy to take it on notice and give the member updated figures for the seat of Roe. I will do that as supplementary information. I am happy to provide the member for Roe with information about the statistics for KidSport in his electorate.

[Supplementary Information No B1.]

Mr S.N. AUBREY: I refer to page 529 of budget paper No 2 and the line item “Regional Athlete Support Program”. Can the minister explain what the regional athlete support program is and outline how many athletes benefit from this program?

[8.50 pm]

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member referred to page 529. The regional athlete support program supports regional athletes who are on a pathway to further opportunities in their chosen sport. We recognise that regionally based athletes do not always get the same opportunities as their city counterparts. They are further away from elite training places and they may not necessarily have the same depth of coaching available to them. Many regional athletes of all ages travel to the metropolitan area or to regional centres to access further training and development.

The regional athlete support program has three key elements. The first element is the regional talent development network. Athletes are identified as having an enhanced talent in a particular code and supported in the further development of their skills within their particular athletic genre. The second element is the athlete travel subsidy scheme. I sign-off on lots of these. It is really interesting to read through the applications because there are some really talented young men and women who aspire to progress on that pathway. I really hope that many of them will ultimately reach the elite pathway, which they have the opportunity to do. The subsidy program supports athletes to attend state and national championships. The subsidy scheme supports them to travel. They are assessed on the criteria. That is the athlete travel subsidy scheme. The third element is the regional education program. That provides face-to-face and online webinar workshops usually through the regional academy structure. There is robust regional academy infrastructure in place in most of the regions. It also assists athletes and their parents to connect with talent centre athletes, coaches and officials so that the athlete is supported holistically. It is a good program. There is an allocation of \$4.9 million in this budget to continue the program.

Under the regional talent program network, a range of associations are supported. It is very successful. I have had the privilege since becoming minister of attending a number of the academies and some of the events in regional areas that acknowledge those athletes. Regional Western Australia has a tremendous reputation in a range of codes and athletic genres. As we move towards the 2032 Olympics, there is absolutely no reason why the 2032 Olympic team will not have some regional Western Australian athletes. I have already met one of them in Collie. Young Gemma is only 15 years old and I reckon she will be a javelin champion very, very soon. I think she won a national title only recently. But regional WA has a number of examples of these athletes and this program strongly supports them.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Minister, I agree that it is a great program but why is there no funding for it whatsoever in the out year 2026–27?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: As the member knows, we continue to assess programs such as this. It is in this coming budget, and future budget processes will assess the effectiveness of the program. That will be a consideration for another budget. I understand that it is a royalties for regions program so it is subject to a cyclical allocation. I think it is a three-year program. But I will fight hard to make sure that it stays, so the member should not worry about that. A lot of athletes in the Peel region have been successful recipients of grants.

Mr M. HUGHES: Can the minister put his cultural hat on? I refer to page 529 and the line item “Connecting to Country”. How does Connecting to Country support the preservation of Aboriginal culture and in the process strengthen our diverse cultures across WA?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I thank the member for the question. Was the member referring to page 529 of budget paper No 2?

Mr M. HUGHES: Yes.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The Connecting to Country program has been very successful. It supports WA Aboriginal people and organisations to undertake on-country activities. These activities vary but they are very grassroots oriented and designed to cater for the needs and the aspirations of young Aboriginal people in the community. Since 2017, there have been about 82 Connecting to Country program projects supported. Twelve of them were in the member for Roe's electorate, in Esperance and the goldfields; 20 in the Kimberley; 18 in the Perth metropolitan area; seven in the midwest; two in the south west; two in the wheatbelt; 16 in the Pilbara; three in the Gascoyne; and two in the great southern. The programs delivered enable young Aboriginal people to continue to recognise Aboriginal cultural leadership and support leadership development in those young people. The program has some great mental health, health and wellbeing outcomes. They include activities such as camps, artists-in-residence working with groups of young people, archiving songlines, dance, bush classrooms, recording oral histories and connections with elders. A whole suite of initiatives are offered. We have committed a further \$500 000 for the years 2023–24 to 2026–27. Of course, as we know, connecting to country is important and develops within young Aboriginal people that genuine connection to their culture. Working closely with local elders in delivering those programs is really important. I think it is a worthwhile program.

The CHAIR: Members, we are still on division 36. We have VenuesWest, Heritage, the Heritage Council of Western Australia, the National Trust and the Western Australian Institute of Sport, so are you persisting with division 36?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: The Western Australian Institute of Sport is not happening.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much. That is on my list. We will move the division later. Do members have any more questions on division 36?

[9.00 pm]

Dr D.J. HONEY: I refer to pages 548 and 549 and details of controlled grants and subsidies. How are projects determined? How does the government determine what is included and excluded under controlled grants and subsidies?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Some of those projects are the delivery of specific election commitments. Some of them relate to strategic projects that are in development or on a journey, effectively, in their development and implementation. The director general might want to add something further to clarify the third one, which I forget.

Ms L. Chopping: It would obviously be easier if a line item was specifically identified because we could talk about the background to how that commitment came about. But as the minister said, a number of them are election commitments across all portfolios that we attend to. Some of them are ongoing programs that have been around for quite some time, and some are new initiatives developed through the usual process that government develops new programs, which is as part of the development of a strategy that has undergone significant community consultation and feedback from stakeholders on the way to get there.

Dr D.J. HONEY: The minister would be aware of the substantial criticism of the former Liberal–National government for its choice to support community projects based on electorates.

The CHAIR: Drawing a line and moving forward, what is the question, member?

Dr D.J. HONEY: I am moving to the question. When I look at the table, I see that there is not a single location-specific grant in a non-Labor electorate. All the location-specific grants occur in Labor electorates. Of the six electorates outside of Labor's lower house membership, there is not a single project in Vasse, Cottesloe, Central Wheatbelt, Moore and North West Central.

The CHAIR: Member, do you want to withdraw? It is not compliant with standing orders in terms of questions.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Withdraw what?

The CHAIR: Questions should not contain preambles, opinions or statements of fact unless they are necessary to render the question intelligible. Questions should not contain argument, allegations, interference, imputations, epithets, ironical expressions or hypothetical matters. I think the member's words come under a few of those categories.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I am happy to answer the question. It is an interesting line to draw when we consider that many electorates in the state of Western Australia are held by the government. I can assure the member that these programs and projects are delivered having regard to need and strategic deliverables. We do not take into account whether they are in a Labor or Liberal seat; rather, we take into account need. There have been a number of projects, including those with funding from the community sporting and recreation facilities fund, and election commitments that have been delivered in the member's electorate. I opened a project at Cottesloe football oval with the Mayor of the Town of Cottesloe that was funded by this government. It is a very, very nice looking initiative. One of the other things the member would be aware of is that a lot of sport and cultural activities take place in a range of centres to which people travel. It just happens that a lot of our major cultural institutions are in the Perth CBD. We want to encourage people from all electorates to travel to them. We have extensive program deliverables in

some of our major cultural institutions and they are for the benefit of all Western Australians. People might travel to regional centres for sport. I refer to Geraldton, where there have been initiatives in basketball and field facilities to cater for activities for people outside the immediate electorate. They also benefit people who travel to play on them. It is not the fault of the Labor government that it holds 53 of the 59 seats of the Legislative Assembly. Local governments within the member's area and Vasse, the two Legislative Assembly seats held by the Liberal Party, are of course not ineligible to apply for CSRFF funding or artist-in-residence programs through our cultural programs. Those sort of programs and projects continue. We will not discriminate, but we will make sure that high-quality activities are promoted throughout the state of Western Australia.

Dr D.J. HONEY: A question.

The CHAIR: Another own goal, no doubt.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I heard what the minister said, but the opposition has 10 per cent of the electorates not held by the Labor Party and zero funding in the forward estimates, so it appears that those seats have been completely ignored by this government.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Various programs are subject to application, like the CSRFF. Let us look at the Gwoonwardu Mia, Gascoyne Aboriginal Heritage and Cultural Centre, which is funded by the state. It was reopened by the McGowan government after it was closed by the former Liberal–National government. That facility is managed by the Western Australian Museum Boola Bardip and funded through royalties for regions. It is now open and funded to continue to provide programs and opportunities for visitors and local Indigenous communities, and there are a number of individuals there. There are a variety of programs through our program delivery that are delivered to all seats in Western Australia. The member's premise is inaccurate and incorrect.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I refer to page 534 and the first dot point, "Cultural and Arts Industry Support". What is funded in 2023–24 that is not funded in the out years? I notice a substantial drop-off in that area.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Some of the programs that support things like Getting the Show Back on the Road and other programs specific to supporting industry and creatives have ceased. Indeed, funding for Getting the Show Back on the Road is no longer required because we were able to get the show back on the road during COVID. The member will see some reflow of forecast underspends within the allocations for the 2023–24 budget year and the out years. There are also commitments to update budget time frames for the Aboriginal cultural centre, for example, which is a major initiative of the state government that will focus on delivering an Aboriginal cultural centre by 2030. In terms of other initiatives, some programs will be completed, such as the event suppliers support program through the alfresco support program. That will no longer continue because we have returned to pre-COVID-19 levels and those supports were specific to the COVID situation. There is an adjustment to the arts lotteries special purpose grant expenditure. This was progressed to recognise an increased funding provision from the Lotteries Commission, which saw a reflow of expenditure in the arts lotteries special purpose account—the 2022–23 estimated actuals increased by \$4.4 million. That is the explanation for some of those changes.

[9.10 pm]

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Does culture and the arts industry support include funding for Coldplay?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: That is a tourism initiative.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Given the minister's appearance at the media event in relation to Coldplay —

The CHAIR: None of this is in this particular division, member.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I know that Chris Martin is very concerned that the minister might appear at some later stage, given his efforts. Given the fact that the minister was at the media conference, can he advise whether part of the agreement for Coldplay coming to Perth involves any geo-blocking of customers seeking to purchase tickets in order to give preference to visitors from overseas or members of cabinet?

The CHAIR: That should be directed to the Minister for Tourism. Let us move on.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: There is no line item for this because it is not within my remit. The member needs to ask the Minister for Tourism those sorts of questions.

The CHAIR: Let us move on. The dogs are barking and the caravan is moving on. Anything further on this division?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I think we will move on to the next one.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I thank the advisers from the two portfolio areas who have joined us.

The appropriation was recommended.